

CLAIMS:

1. A membrane connector comprising a substantially annular body defining an interior space substantially bounded by the body, a projection having a proximal end and a distal end, the proximal end of the projection being provided on the body, the projection projecting into the interior space and being provided in substantially the same plane as the body, and the distal end being spaced from the body.

5 2. A membrane connector as claimed in claim 1 wherein the distal end includes fastener retaining means to assist retention of a fastener.

10 3. A membrane connector as claimed in claim 2 wherein the fastener retaining means comprise an expanded portion of the projection at or adjacent to the distal end.

15 4. A membrane connector as claimed in claim 2 or claim 3 wherein the fastener retaining means comprise at least one substantially perpendicular projection from the projection at or adjacent to the distal end of the projection.

20 5. A membrane connector as claimed in claim 1 wherein the distal end comprises a substantial T-shape.

6. A membrane connector as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the body includes membrane attachment means.

25 7. A membrane connector as claimed in claim 6 wherein the membrane attachment means comprise one or more apertures provided in the body.

8. A membrane connector as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the body has a polygonal shape.

30 9. A membrane connector comprising a body substantially bounding an interior space, the body including a projection having a proximal end and a distal end, the proximal end of the projection being provided on the body, the projection projecting into the interior space and being provided in substantially the same plane as the body, and the distal end being spaced from the body.

10. A sail having one or more of a clew, head or tack including a connector as claimed in any one of the preceding claims.

5 11. A sail as claimed in claim 10 wherein the connector is attached to the sail by one or more lengths of flexible material.

12. A sail as claimed in claim 11 wherein the flexible material is flexible strip material.

10 13. A sail as claimed in anyone of claims 10 to 12 including one or more cover panels to substantially cover the connector.

14. A sailing craft having a sail as claimed in any one of claims 10 to 13.

15 15. A clew ring comprising a substantially annular body defining an interior space substantially bounded by the body, a projection having a proximal end and a distal end, the proximal end of the projection being provided on the body, the projection projecting into the interior space and being provided in substantially the same plane as the body, and, the distal end being spaced from the body.

20 16. A method of fastening a membrane, the method comprising the steps of: attaching a membrane connector as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 8 to the membrane; providing a fastener having a hook or loop, and; placing the hook or loop over the projection and moving the membrane or the fastener so that the hook or loop is disposed at the proximal end of the projection.

25 17. A method as claimed in claim 16 wherein the step of providing a fastener comprises providing a loop of flexible material.

30 18. A method as claimed in claim 17 further including the steps of passing the loop about a further fastening member and placing the loop over the opposite side of the projection.

19. A method as claimed in claim 18 wherein the step of passing the loop about a further fastening member comprises the step of passing the loop through an eye in a rope.

35 20. A method as claimed in any one of claims 16 to 19 wherein the step of connecting

the membrane connector to the fastener includes the steps of looping one or more lengths of flexible material about or through parts of the connector and affixing the one or more lengths to the membrane.

- 5        21. A method as claimed in any one of claims 16 to 19 including the step of substantially covering the connector.
- 10      22. A membrane connector substantially as herein described with reference to any one of the embodiments shown in the accompanying drawings.
- 15      23. A clew ring substantially as herein described with reference to any one of the embodiments shown in the accompanying drawings.
24. A sail substantially as herein described with reference to any one of the embodiments shown in the accompanying drawings.
- 15      25. A method of fastening a membrane substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.